



Special to the Horn Courier

Capt. Seth Michaud, a CH-53 pilot with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron-461, was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. Michaud was killed during a training accident at Godora Range, approximately 60 miles north of Camp Lemonier.

“Ironhorse” remembers fallen comrade

SGT. WAYNE CAMPBELL
THE HORN COURIER

The Marines of “Ironhorse” Heavy Helicopter Squadron-461 held a one-year memorial celebration Tuesday at the General’s quarters here for a fallen Marine Capt. Seth Michaud.

A brief speech was given by Lt. Col. Robert D. Pridgen, the Ironhorse’s detachment officer-in-charge, recalling the training accident of June 22, 2003. He also recognized the Marines and sailors who put their own lives in danger to help save the lives of their fellow Marines that day.

Michaud, an Ironhorse pilot, was killed in a training accident at Godora Range, approximately 60 miles north of Camp Lemonier.

Late in the morning of June 22, 2003, Capt. Seth Michaud was killed when an Air Force B-52 inadvertently dropped ordnance south of the target onto the Godora Range observation

“These are the people who do this job ... with no other satisfaction than to know the job is done well and Marines are taking care of their own.”

-Lt. Col. Robert D. Pridgen

post where Michaud and other HMH-461 Marines stood watch – ready for a medical evacuation mission if the call came. That call came, but in a capacity none would have guessed, according to Pridgen.

Despite personal injuries and .50 caliber rounds cooking off, the Marines present acted heroically by running into three CH-56 aircraft and pulling the injured out, Pridgen said.

The squadron’s flight surgeon, Navy Lt. Eric Netland, despite having his leg severed from just below the knee, he continued to give life saving procedures for the Marines to apply to the injured while drifting in and out of consciousness, explained Pridgen.

“When I talked to the doctor who arrived with the medevac helicopters, he said it was the most organized mass casualty triage site he had seen,” said Pridgen.

Brig. Gen. Samuel Helland, camp commanding general, explained that with all the conflicts in the world, accidents will happen.

“Accidents should not happen, but they do, and we need to learn to deal with human error,” said Helland. “We need to all work together to prevent accidents from happening and understand why they happen so we can fix the problem. If you can understand that you are a true hero.”

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The Horn Courier
Combined Joint Task Force
Horn of Africa

Commanding General,
Camp Lemonier
Brig. Gen. Samuel T. Helland

Director of Public Affairs
Maj. Mitchell B. Edgar

Operations Officer
1st Lt. Teresa L. Sullivan

Public Affairs Chief
Sgt. Jerad W. Alexander

Combat Correspondents
Sgt. Wayne Campbell
Cpl. Jeff M. Nagan
Spc. Eric M. McKeeby

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Photo by:
Sgt. Wayne Campbell

Lance Cpl. Richard Hughes, an aerial observer for Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron-461, signals the pilot to bring the rotor blades of the Super Stallion to full speed before flight Monday.

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